

The INDEPENDENT

Vol. 21, No. 14

"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

July 20, 2006

Setting an example



PHOTO BY MARK DUBROW

Brian Willson displays his bicycle powered by hand-cycling, as well as his solar-powered electric truck. Veterans for Peace support research and use of alternative fuels. See story on page 20

Fire Season starts, safety restrictions now in effect

Predicted triple-digit temperatures prompted the Oregon Department of Forestry to tighten fire restrictions as of July 19 in several fire protection districts west of the Cascades. The Astoria, Tillamook, Forest Grove, West Oregon, Western Lane, Douglas and South Cascade districts will enter regulated use at 1:00 a.m. this Wednesday.

"We're into that part of the fire season where fire starts are more likely in our forests, on our own properties and within or adjacent to our communities," reports Mike Simek, Unit Forester with the Oregon Department of Forestry. With record high temperatures predicted, grass, brush and forest fuels will dry quickly and burn readily. The risk of an ignition source starting a fire goes up dramatically with these hot and dry conditions. "Active citizen

participation in fire prevention is essential and these regulated use restrictions being implemented clearly elevate the role we all play in preventing human caused fires," Simek stated. Human-caused fires continue to be the top cause of forest fires in our area.

Residents and forest users will see florescent orange regulated use signs being posted. These reflect the public use restrictions now in effect on all lands. Simek also pointed out that private timberlands may have tighter restrictions or even closures, so it's always best to check with landowners and the local ODF office about current restrictions and closures. All residents and visitors are asked to use extreme caution when recreating, traveling, and working in grass, brush and forested areas.

Please see page 5

Kline picked for interim city head

Meet M.R. "Dick" Kline, the Vernonia interim City Administrator. Kline has been hired by the city to handle the duties of city administrator while the search for the next city administrator, which can take two to three months, is underway.

Kline has previously worked as city manager or city coordinator in Vale, Ontario, and most recently, in Cornelius. He was city manager of Cornelius, which has a population of 10,150, from 2002-2005.

Before he began working in city government, Kline spent more than 22 years as a hardware and variety store owner/operator in Nyssa. Before that, he was in the U.S. Army. He has a Bachelor's degree in Business at Oregon State and a Masters in Management from Northwestern University, in Illinois.



Dick Kline

July 10 was his first day at his interim desk in Vernonia, but even after only a week on the job, Kline identifies the sewer project as the biggest issue facing Vernonia. He says his job here is to help the community with the issues surrounding the sewer project and

Please see page 4

Voter survey shows no support for school bond

By Noni Andersen

After a year of work by the Vernonia School District's Long Range Planning Committee, Moore Information, an opinion research company, was authorized to do a telephone survey to find out what district voters thought about the district and the potential for building improvements or replacements.

What the survey demonstrated, all too clearly, is that most voters in the district won't

support either a \$22.5 million or a \$17.5 million bond issue. That result is not surprising. Either amount would add hundreds of dollars to property tax bills.

What is surprising, or depressing, about the survey results are the number of voters in the district who are unaware of either overcrowding or poor facility conditions. Fifty-one percent say the schools are not overcrowded; 45 percent say the buildings are in "excellent"

or "pretty good" condition.

Volunteers who have put in long hours and considerable effort on the Long Range Planning Committee are, understandably, discouraged. In spite of their efforts, many in the community either don't believe, or don't care that the district's overcrowded and inadequate facilities exist, or that they have a negative impact on children's education.

The committee will take time off and meet again until fall.